

REMARKS

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Claims 1-20 and 22-26 are pending after the amendments. Claims 21 and 27 are cancelled.

The amendments to independent Claims 1 and 22 are supported in the various figures. For example, in Figs. 1-3, a trigger event for the bonus game is the occurrence of five "F's". A plurality (e.g., all) of the symbols then become displayed values, so the player becomes excited by seeing some high values among lesser values. The computer (not the player) then randomly selects one or more of the displayed values (but not all the values), and the player is awarded a bonus based on the value(s) randomly selected. The values will typically be credits.

The examiner rejected the independent Claims 1 and 22 as being anticipated by Bennett (WO 01/58546). The examiner also rejected dependent Claims 2-11, 14-17, and 23-26 as being anticipated by Bennett.

In Bennett, upon a triggering event, the player touches displayed special symbols (e.g., the J symbols in Fig. 3a), and the special symbols touched reveal award credits (Figs. 3b-3d). Bennett's other games are similar in that the player touches certain symbols to reveal hidden awards.

The Bennett game is very different from Applicant's game of independent Claims 1 and 22. In Claims 1 and 22, the award values are first displayed to the player, since the symbols from the main game are converted to the displayed award values. This is very important since the player now sees the possible awards she can win, which adds excitement to the game. The computer, not the player, then randomly selects one or more of the displayed award values. In Bennett, the player does not see the awards before the player touches the special symbols, so there is no added excitement provided by the Bennett machine in showing the player what she might have won. Further, the stated goal of the Bennett game is to give the player some interaction with the game (by touching the special symbols) to achieve greater interest (page 6, lines 4-6). Such player interaction does not occur in Claims 1 and 22 since the computer makes the random selection (it would not make sense for the player to choose a displayed value).

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Accordingly, Bennett is very different in principle from Applicant's invention of Claims 1 and 22 and has a different goal, which would be destroyed by modifying Bennett's invention to be like Applicant's invention. It is therefore respectfully submitted that Claims 1, 22, and their dependent claims are allowable over Bennett.

The examiner rejected independent Claim 1 and dependent Claims 18-20 as being anticipated by Locke (US Pub. 2003/0022712).

In Locke, a trigger event causes a special symbol (e.g., a moon symbol) to randomly move over other symbol positions (e.g., Figs. 3-5) to reveal wager multipliers as the special symbol moves over each symbol position.

Applicant's Claim 1 has been described above. An important part of Claim 1 is that the possible awards that can be won are first displayed to the player so the player gets excited about any high awards displayed. The computer then randomly selects one or more of the displayed awards. This is very different from Locke, and Locke could not suggest the invention of Claim 1 and its dependent claims. It is therefore respectfully submitted that Claim 1 and its dependent claims are allowable over Locke.

The examiner rejected independent Claims 21 and 27 as being anticipated by Gerrard (US Pub. 2004/0048644). Those claims have been cancelled.

The examiner rejected dependent Claims 12 and 13 as being obvious over Bennett (WO 01/58546) in view of Bennett (US pat. 6,251,013).

It is respectfully submitted that Applicant's amendments to Claim 1 and the remarks support the conclusion that all claims dependent on Claim 1 are allowable. However, Claims 12 and 13 will still be discussed.

Claim 12 includes the limitations of "wherein detecting a trigger event comprises detecting one or more special symbols displayed in the base game, wherein randomly selecting at least one of the values comprises changing values in a column in which a special symbol is located, and wherein awarding a player a bonus award comprises awarding a player a bonus award based on a value appearing in the position of the special symbol after the values have stopped changing."

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An example of Claim 12 is in Applicant's Figs. 8-10, wherein the special symbol (\$) occurs on a particular reel (column) at a particular symbol position and causes all the symbols on that reel to change to values. That reel then rotates and stops. The value at the same symbol position as the special symbol is won by the player.

In Bennett '013, a sprite (or pixie) randomly designates one or more of the symbols as a special symbol, such as a wild card. Winning combinations may then use that wild card in awarding the player a prize. The examiner pointed to Bennett's col. 2, lines 27-32, and col. 5, lines 34-44, for teaching that the sprite can convert an entire reel to special symbols and, after the reel rotates and stops, the machine determines a win based on the new symbols displayed.

Bennett '013 is very different from the limitation in Applicant's Claim 12. In Bennett '013, symbol combinations are made from the displayed symbols in the array, including the symbols on the reel designated by the sprite. In contrast, in Applicant's invention, the rotation of the reel directly identifies an award by displaying the award value at the position of the special symbol.

Accordingly, Bennett '013 could not suggest the limitation of Claim 12, and the combination of Bennett '013 and Bennett '546 could not suggest Claim 1 or Claim 12. Dependent Claim 13 is allowable for the same reasons given for the allowability of Claim 12.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that all pending claims are allowable over the cited art. If the examiner wishes to discuss any clarifying amendments, the examiner is requested to call Applicant's attorney at 408-382-0480 x202.


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